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ABSTRACT

In order to discover what kinds of programs and services were being provided for female students and community members, a survey was designed and mailed to the deans of students of all public community colleges in the United States during the fall of 1974. The data presented here represent responses from 577 institutions (88 percent). The survey instrument consists of nine questions designed to elicit responses in the areas of special curriculum and program design, funding, the availability of a women's resource center, community-school interrelationships, publicity, the degree of concern for women, and the need for a national clearinghouse on women's programs at community colleges. Over half of the responding institutions offer special programs for women which currently take two major forms: specialized credit courses in academic areas and non-credit offerings. Most of these programs are financed directly by the colleges or by student tuition. Respondents reported that various methods are employed to inform women about programs and campus activities. Only 73 institutions (12.7 percent) have women's resource centers in operation. While there is considerable concern for women students in the colleges, one-fifth of the deans still perceived "little concern." Almost half of the respondents believe that a national clearinghouse would be helpful. (NHM)

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WOMEN'S PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

(Nichols, Cratch, and White Study)

OCC

OAKLAND
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

JC 750 552

Prepared by the Offices of the
Dean of Administrative Services
and the
Dean of Students

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WOMEN'S PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Donald D. Nichols

While much attention has been focused in recent months on the topic of women in higher education, relatively little has been written about the conditions at community/junior colleges. Recent action by the AACJC helped spotlight the area of women's programs. This was done when the AACJC gave council status to the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges.

In an attempt to remedy the information gap, a survey instrument was mailed to representatives at all public community colleges in the United States in the Fall of 1974. The primary purpose of the survey was to discover what kinds of programs and services were being provided for female students and members of the college's surrounding community. Deans of Students were asked to respond and 577 supplied data. A surprising survey response of 88% seems to indicate a significant interest in the topic of women's programs.

According to the survey responses, 50.8 percent (293) of the institutions offer special programs for women students. The program currently takes two major forms: Specialized Credit Courses in academic areas, i.e. "Women in Literature," and Non-Credit offerings. In the first category, over 10 percent of the colleges are offering credit courses with a women's emphasis in Psychology, Sociology, and History. One hundred eleven institutions (19%) are offering courses in the literary area, the largest single discipline represented. Non-Credit offerings include short courses designed specifically for women with the following represented: Personal awareness and/or Search for Identity (27.2%), Problem-solving (16.6%), and Consciousness-raising Experiences (16.8%). Special seminars and conferences are also a part of this category and include programs on the Feminist Movement (12.5%), and Women in the Labor Force (20.5%). About

one-third (31%) of the colleges are offering programs designed to encourage women to continue their education.

A primary concern for colleges starting new activities is financial, and the survey found that women's programs are funded in a variety of ways. Most of the programs are financed directly by the colleges (32.6%) or by student tuition (23.6%). Over ten percent of the respondents indicated that program support came from State agencies (12.5%), Student Activity Accounts (11.1%), and by utilizing volunteers (11.3%). Only 6.2 percent of the programs are funded by Federal government grants and 1.9 percent receive assistance from private sources.

Respondents reported that various methods are employed to inform women about programs and campus activities. On-campus resources include announcements in student newspapers, special posters, and student bulletins. Over one-third of the institutions reported using these techniques. Information on women's programs is transmitted by faculty members to their classes in one-fifth of the colleges, but only 8.1 percent of the institutions use the campus radio for this purpose.

Programs are publicized to local community women by newspaper articles and ads (53.2%), and by radio-television announcements (38%). Colleges also make use of posters and handbills for this purpose.

One objective of the survey was to determine how many colleges have formally organized Women's Resources Centers in operation. Only 73 institutions (12.7%) reported that such Centers have been established. About one-fifth (18.4%) are

actively involved in encouraging community women (non-students) to use the Center.

On the basis of returns, it appears that the Women's Center have somewhat adequate facilities, staffing, and services. Of the 73 colleges operating Centers, most provide meeting rooms, and separate budgets for programs. Almost all Centers employ paid staff while utilizing volunteers for assistance. Comprehensive Day Care programs are found in almost one-half and about a third provide baby-sitting services for children of students. Special counseling for women students is offered by almost all Centers in operation, but only about one-fifth give special financial assistance to women who enroll. Functioning advisory committees are found in 52 of the 73 colleges with Women's Centers.

A third significant interest of the survey was to investigate the perceptions of Deans of Students regarding the degree of concern for women students at their college. The following table shows their responses:

TABLE I

DEGREE OF CONCERN FOR WOMEN STUDENTS
AT PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCORDING TO DEANS' PERCEPTIONS

RESPONSES	N	%
1. High Concern	157	27.2
2. Moderate Concern	293	50.8
3. Little Concern	120	20.8
4. None	8	1.2

While there is considerable concern for women students by college deans, one-fifth (20.8%) still perceived "little concern" at some public institutions.

A final question in the survey centered on the need for a national clearinghouse on women's programs at public community colleges. Almost half of the respondents (44.2%) believe that this would be helpful. For colleges wishing to begin or expand special programs and services for women students, the positive experiences and expertise of those institutions with established programs would be of assistance. A large amount of time and effort can be saved by establishing an effective "sharing" network. It seems fitting that the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges serve this role.

CONCLUSION

From survey responses, it seems that public community colleges are well on their way to meeting the special needs of women students. However, it's safe to say that there is still much to be done. Like any innovation or new movement on campus, future expansion of women's programs will be dependent on funds available, the commitment of administrative leadership, and the efficacy of women students and faculty in articulating their needs.

Donald Nichols is Dean of Students at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington, Michigan. The survey instrument was designed with the assistance of Peggy Cratch and Mary White, counselors at Orchard Ridge.

WOMEN'S PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

January, 1975

Dean of Students at Public Community Colleges throughout the United States provided the following information regarding Women's Programs. The data represent responses from 577 institutions.

QUESTION	RESPONSES			
	Yes	%	No	%
1. Does your college offer special programs for women students?	293	50.8	283	49.2
2. If yes, what form do programs take?				
A. Specialized courses				
a. Literature (i.e. "Women in Literature")	111	19.2		
b. Sociology	72	12.5		
c. History	72	12.5		
d. Psychology	71	12.3		
B. Non-credit offerings				
1. Short courses designed specifically for women				
a. Personal awareness, identity search	157	27.2		
b. Problem-solving for women	96	16.6		
c. Consciousness-raising experiences	97	16.8		
2. Seminars, conferences, etc.				
a. Programs on feminist movement	72	12.5		
b. Programs designed to encourage women to continue their education	179	31.0		
c. Women in the work force	118	20.5		
3. How are Women's programs funded?				
a. Student Activity funds	64	11.1		
b. College funds	188	32.6		
c. Federal grant	36	6.2		
d. State funds	72	12.5		
e. Private sources	11	1.9		
f. Tuition by students	136	23.6		
g. Using volunteers	65	11.3		

		Yes	%
4.	Does your college have an organized Women's Resources Center?	73	12.7
5.	If so, what does it include?		
	a. Meeting room(s)	65	11.3
	b. Budget for program	44	7.6
	c. Paid staff	55	9.5
	d. Volunteer staff	52	9.0
	e. Special financial assistance for women students	14	2.4
	f. Special counseling for women students	69	12.0
	g. Comprehensive Day Care Program	34	5.9
	h. Baby-sitting service for students	23	4.0
	i. Advisory committee	52	9.0
6.	Are community women (non-students) encouraged to use the Center?	106	18.4
7.	What methods are employed to reach women?		
	A. On campus:		
	a. Student newspaper	237	41.1
	b. Special bulletins	191	33.1
	c. Campus radio	47	8.1
	d. Announcements in class	113	19.6
	e. Posters	212	36.7
	B. In the community:		
	a. Local newspaper	307	53.2
	b. Handbills	89	15.4
	c. Posters	109	18.9
	d. Radio-Tv announcements	219	38.0
8.	In your opinion, what is the degree of concern for women students at your college?		
	a. High concern	157	27.2
	b. Moderate concern	293	50.8
	c. Little concern	120	20.8
	d. None	8	1.4
9.	Is there a need for a national clearinghouse on Women's Programs at community colleges?	255	44.2

Thank you for assisting us with this survey.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES